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MENGELE

FRANKFURT, WEST GERMANY

West German investigators hunting Josef Mengele said today they would ask to see U.S. intelligence reports which show the Nazi death camp doctor may have been involved in a South American drugs ring.

"We are interested in seeing these documents. They may be of significance to the case," Frankfurt State Prosecutor Hans-Eberhard Klein told Reuters in response to queries.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) documents were released in Washington last week. They show that in 1979 the CIA asked other federal agencies to investigate intelligence reports linking Mengele to a big drugs trafficking operation.

Mengele, who would now be 73, is wanted by West Germany and Israel on charges of taking part in the murder of 400,000 Jews in Auschwitz concentration camp, where he conducted horrifying medical experiments on thousands of prisoners.

The Frankfurt prosecutor's office, which is responsible for Mengele's case, has offered a record \$300,000 reward for his capture.

Klein said the office would ask U.S. investigators to make the documents available in the course of regular consultations.

Members of the U.S. Office of Special Investigations held talks with West German prosecutors in Frankfurt early last week on ways of coordinating their hunt for Mengele more closely.

According to sources quoted in the partially-censored CIA reports, Mengele arrived in South America in 1951 and traveled extensively before settling in Paraguay in 1972. There he allegedly owned a farm under an alias and was "heavily involved in narcotics traffic," the sources told the CIA.

Mengele obtained Paraguayan citizenship in 1959, but it was revoked 20 years later and the Asuncion government has said he left the country in 1960.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who will meet Paraguayan President Alfredo Stroessner during his working visit to West Germany in July, has pledged to urge the South American leader to cooperate in the hunt for Mengele.

Klein said Frankfurter prosecutors had no firm clues to Mengele's present whereabouts but noted that in the past "most leads pointed to Paraguay."